

THE BATTALION

NEWS BRIEFS

Losses at the heart of trade dispute

WASHINGTON (AP) — Brutal losses, roses. The ultimate symbol of love is at the heart of a bitter dispute between U.S. and Latin American growers that could make romance a bit more expensive. An industry graced with variety names like Only Love, Joy and Tender is showing its thorns, caught in accusations of marketplace mischief and other florid rhetoric. At stake may be the survival of an already diminished industry, relations between hemispheric neighbors, and price and choice Americans see when buying their favorite flower. American growers are attacking reports of Colombian and Ecuadorian growers, believing unchecked shipments from those countries will drive them out of business as surely as carnations have withered.

Suicides plague U.S. servicemen in Haiti

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP) — The U.S. military geared up for a fight with flak jackets and malaria prevention pills, expecting casualties from combat or disease. The only three U.S. servicemen to die so far all took their own lives, and specialists are struggling to prevent further suicides. Battalion chaplains and mental health professionals are sounding out the ranks for signs of stress and depression that could lead to another suicide among the 18,000 U.S. servicemen and women in Operation Uphold Democracy. Commanders are also trying to build up morale by making available radio and TV broadcasts, the occasional steak or day on a beach, and concerts next week by country-western stars The Gatlin Brothers.

Bush, Richards to hold televised debate

AUSTIN (AP) — The Texas gubernatorial candidates, separated by a single percentage point in the most recent opinion poll, head to Dallas Friday night for a televised debate. The prime-time showdown on public station KERA-TV likely will be the only face-to-face meeting between Democratic Gov. Ann Richards and Republican challenger George W. Bush before the Nov. 8 election. U.S. Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison and Democratic nominee Richard Fisher also will debate, the second of three such sessions in their campaign.

New Down Syndrome test proven safe

MONTREAL (AP) — A test for Down syndrome that can be done a full month earlier than the standard method of finding fetal abnormalities has proved safe in a study of more than 150,000 women, researchers reported Thursday. Some research had suggested that the test, chorionic villus sampling, or CVS, could slightly increase the risk of birth defects. But the study found no evidence of that. Amniocentesis, the standard test, does not provide results until the 14th to 16th week of pregnancy. CVS can help ease parents' fears earlier; it provides results in the 10th week of pregnancy.

College Station store's decision to sell liquor gets favorable response from customers

By Stephanie Dube
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Randall's Food and Drug store's decision to sell beer and wine has been a profitable one for the College Station store. Bill Tusing, assistant store director of the Randall's in College Station, said since the store began selling beer and wine Sept. 16, business has boomed. "There has been a great increase in business since we began selling beer and wine," Tusing said. "It was a business decision based on convenience, competition, and customer needs."

Israel seals Gaza Strip, West Bank after bombing

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — As anguished Israelis on Thursday buried their dead from the Tel Aviv bus bombing, authorities ordered sweeping arrests of suspected terrorists and sealed the autonomous Gaza Strip and occupied West Bank. Facing public demands for a crackdown on militants in the wake of Wednesday's bombing, the government also ordered the demolition of the home of a Palestinian suspected in the suicide attack that killed 21 people.

West Bank and Gaza Strip closed off

Following the tragic bombing of a commuter bus in Tel Aviv, the Israeli Cabinet approved the unlimited closure of the two Palestinian autonomous regions on Thursday. The closure denies 65,000 Palestinians entry permits to Israel, keeping them from their jobs. Other measures being considered: Jailing Hamas activists without a trial. Wrecking or sealing homes of Hamas activists. International campaign to cut off donations to Hamas from the U.S., Britain, Iran and other countries.

E-Mail messages outrage networkers

Illegally accessed account used to send racist messages

By Lisa Messer
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Computer users across the nation received white supremacist messages Monday through the electronic mail account of a professor at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi. Grady Blount, a professor of environmental science at Texas A&M in Corpus Christi, said someone stole his Internet password and broke into his E-Mail account Sunday night to send 20,000 racist messages nationwide. "The more time passes, the madder I get," Blount said. "They're trying to stir up

racial strife between people. They're trying to stir up racial strife in us." The messages urged readers to send "minority parasites packing to fend for themselves" and condemn community development funding as support for black "breeding colonies." The message, titled "Free Money" and signed "Crusader," said the federal government funds "80 IQ welfare mothers" and "Jewish organized crime gangs." "And if you burn down your own neighborhood when a court decision doesn't go your way, don't worry. Truckloads of money will soon arrive to build you new breeding colonies - er, I mean houses, apart-

ments, community centers, swimming pools, etc.," the message said. Blount said he has received harsh responses, including death threats, from 1,000 E-Mail users who thought he was the sender. Blount said many of those responses indicate that people believe he is a professor at Texas A&M University. "The messages say things like, 'You Aggies, I always knew y'all were a bunch of racist rednecks, and now we have proof,'" Blount said. "Outside of Texas, everyone just recognizes the A&M part. I want everyone to know that those racist messages have nothing to do with the A&M System at all." The messages resemble a flier produced by the white supremacist group National Alliance in Mills Point, West Virginia. Franklin Pierce, the founder of National Alliance, said he was unaware of the mes-

sage. Pierce said his group did not send the electronic message, but a group member could be responsible. Blount said there is little hope of identifying the message's sender. "The sender was logged on in Wisconsin late Sunday, early Monday," Blount said. "Someone at the university noticed a large amount of messages being sent out and checked on it. When they saw what the message was, they cut the sender off." The sender came into A&M at Corpus Christi's computer network from the University of Texas at Austin and sent the message out from Corpus Christi, Blount said. "They could be in Bangladesh and log on to UT-Austin and log off in Corpus Christi," Blount said, "or they could've been sitting right here on this island." George Kemper, project director in

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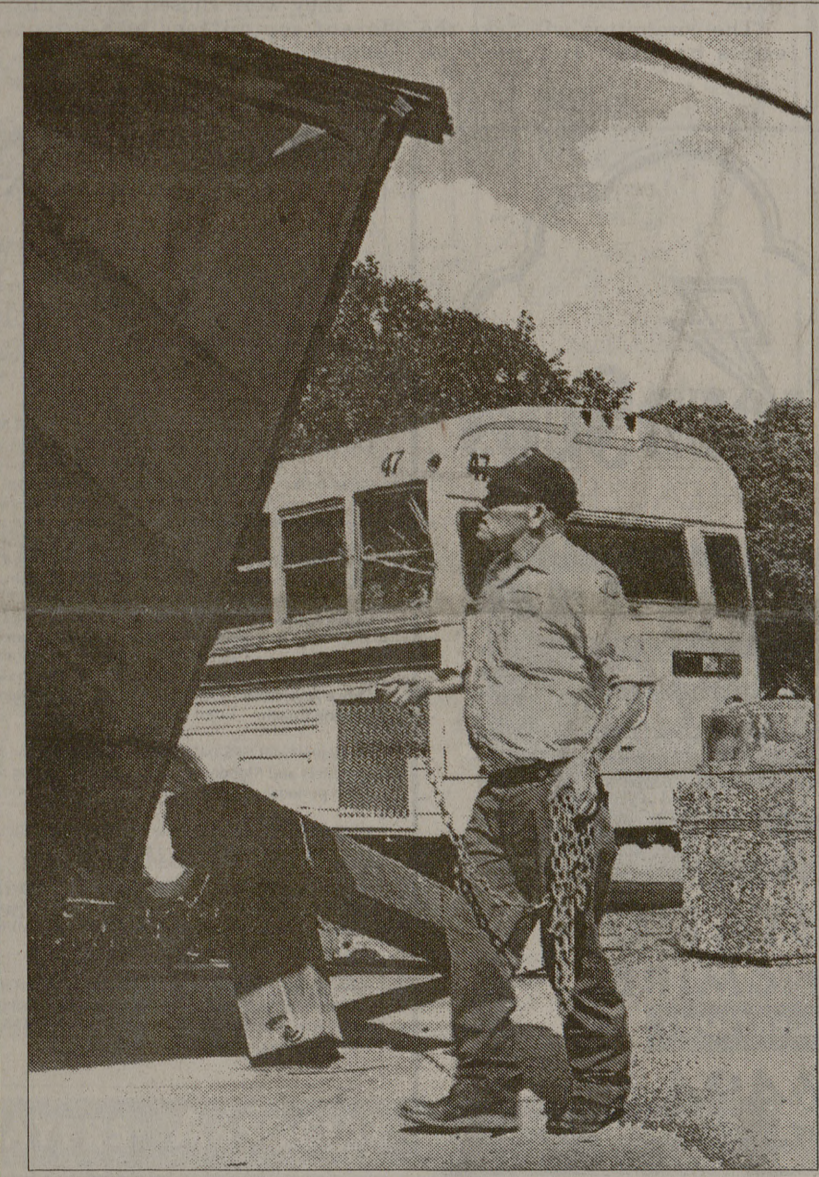
Bowen: decision on multiculturalism to wait until requirement understood

By Amanda Fowle
THE BATTALION
Incidents of racism at Texas A&M have sparked concern about the status of a multiculturalism class requirement. Last November, the Faculty Senate approved a U.S. Cultures and International Requirement for all students. The requirement is now awaiting President Bowen's approval. Dr. Mark Weichold, speaker of the Faculty Senate, said the Senate spent a long time work-

ing on the proposal. "We tried to prevent problems that other universities have had with their multiculturalism requirements," he said. "Our proposal represents lots of compromises." Weichold said that many people who disagreed with the course requirement did not understand it. The proposal requires students to take one three-hour class to meet a U.S. Cultures requirement and one three-hour class to meet an Interna-

tional requirement. Weichold said that some people thought that only one class would be offered to meet the requirement, but there are about 250 classes to choose from. "If you had the entire student body required to take a single course," he said, "you face the problem of students being subjected to a particular political agenda." Weichold said that the requirement will not add any

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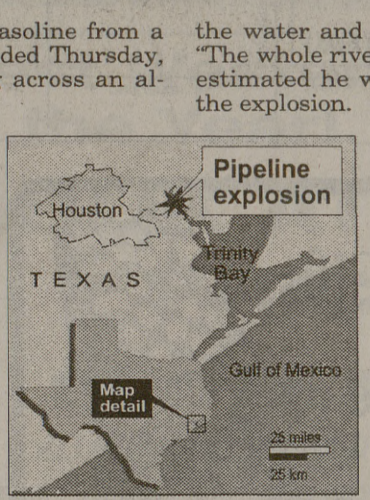


Kim Smith/Special to THE BATTALION

Who put that hut there?
An A&M physical plant employee works to remove the wreckage left after a bus ran into the hut near Fish Pond Thursday afternoon.

Houston: from flood to fire

HOUSTON (AP) — Leaking gasoline from a ruptured interstate pipeline exploded Thursday, sending 100-foot flames snaking across an already flooded San Jacinto River. "It looked like hell opened up on the water and the whole river was gasoline," said Mike Norman, who was on the riverbank trying to retrieve his sailboat from the river when the explosion occurred about 10:20 a.m. The explosion at the mouth of the nation's interstate pipeline network known as "The Spaghetti Bowl" also caused gasoline future prices to jump in trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. "At this point, we believe the force of the floodwaters caused the pipeline to break, that is the best information we have right now," said Ed Schaefer, assistant coordinator for the Texas Department of Public Safety's emergency management division. Norman said he smelled gas an hour before he saw a house explode, setting off an inferno on the river's surface that was sheened with gasoline. "The house exploded and it started down



the water and it went all over," Norman said. "The whole river was cascading into flames." He estimated he was about 400 yards away from the explosion. The area already had been evacuated because of the floods, although six area schools were emptied today after the explosion. "There were three loud booms and then an immediate black cloud," said a witness, Doug Trowbridge. "It just began to spread like wildfire." Although no deaths or serious injuries were immediately reported, television footage showed mobile homes and boats ablaze. Widely separated columns of smoke could also be seen throughout the forested area lining the river. "This is not unusual for a flood," said Transportation Secretary Federico Pena, in Houston to observe the flood damage. "We have seen this in other parts of the country where you have massive flooding and pipes are hit, tanks get loose and you have ruptures and you have explosions. So this is not atypical in that sense."

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